

which is the way it works here. I know I am talking when the Presiding Officer has such a record of bipartisanship and working with others in the Senate—the junior Senator from New Hampshire and the work she has done. And I just wanted to talk for a moment about ROBPORTMAN.

I was at the last speech he gave, his retirement speech, last week. I wanted to just say a few words about his work. He and I, on the big issues, no surprise—Senator PORTMAN, from Cincinnati; I live in northern Ohio—have looked at the world differently on big trade issues, on tax issues. I mean, he was for the Trump tax cut that gave big tax breaks to corporations and, I think, squeezed middle-class and low-income taxpayers. But on the big issues, we, in a sense, canceled each other's vote out, and we talk about that sometimes. But on a lot of Ohio-specific things, we are able to work together on really, really important problem-solving kinds of issues. And a few of them come to mind, like “level the playing field”—the first issue—and then “level the playing field” 2.0,” which will help the United States enforce its trade laws.

While ROB was for NAFTA and I was against it—or for PNTR with China, and I was against it—we did come together in making sure our trade laws are enforced, which helped Ohio businesses and Ohio manufacturing. That is one example.

Another example is what we were able to do in the infrastructure bill. He was a leader on writing the infrastructure bill, always thinking about how important it was—the Brent Spence Bridge in Cincinnati and the Western Hills Viaduct on the western side of Cincinnati, but also what we did on the 71-70 interchange in Columbus, what we were able to do on small township roads around small counties in rural Ohio, what we were able to do in Appalachia, what we were able to do in major transportation projects.

Another example, ROB PORTMAN cared a lot about the environment. He loves canoeing. We worked on issues that matter on the Ohio River and especially issues that matter on Lake Erie. One of my favorite statistics is that Lake Erie, the smallest of the Great Lakes in area, the most shallow, only 30-feet deep, and around Toledo, 90-feet deep, around my wife's home county of Ashtabula. Lake Erie is 2 percent of all the water in the Great Lakes but has 50 percent of the fish, and Lake Superior, the largest lake, has 50 percent of the water and 2 percent of the fish. We know how important Lake Erie is to fishing. We know how important Lake Erie is to our water supply. And we know how important Lake Erie is just as one of the beautiful parts of the Great Lakes that matter to all of us.

So when I think about ROB, I regret he is leaving. I look forward to working with Senator Vance. I am hopeful that we can be as cooperative and effective

as ROB and I have been on issues that are Ohio-specific, and we will continue to search out those issues.

Another one was NASA Glenn in Cleveland. We have one of the 10 NASA facilities in the country. NASA Glenn is particularly important, with the Armstrong Center in Sandusky, to the State's economy, and to our space program. That is in my part of the State. ROB has been helpful there. I have been helpful in his part of the State with Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, one of the key facilities for our U.S. Air Force.

So on issue after issue, many of them, ROB and I have each cosponsored dozens of bills that have become law—some 35, I believe, with each other, that have become law, and dozens more with other Senators in both parties, including Senator HASSAN from New Hampshire, who has been one of the real leaders on doing bipartisan work.

So those kinds of issues don't get the attention of the media, and I don't blame them. They would rather cover when ROB and I disagree than when we agree. But my job, as Senator PORTMAN's job, has always been to look for opportunities to do things together. We found dozens of those opportunities in our 12 years together.

I came in 2006, and he came in 2010. He is retiring at the end of 2022. We had 12 years together, and we were able to accomplish a lot of things for the State. I will miss him. I will miss his leadership. I will miss his reasonableness. And we will continue, I hope, once he retires, in working on other things that are State-specific for my State.

I thank the Presiding Officer for allowing me to speak for a couple of minutes about my friend ROB Portman.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The majority leader.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session and be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO THAO GRIFFITHS

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, I have spent more than 30 years working to build closer relations with Vietnam,

a country where 58,220 Americans and an estimated 3 million Vietnamese died in a war that never should have been fought. In 1975, as the newest member of the Armed Services Committee, I voted to end funding for the war, a vote that caused the largest newspaper in Vermont to predict that I would never be reelected. The citizens of Vermont reelected me seven times, and that vote is among the ones I am proudest of.

The war was a disaster for both countries, and for 20 years after the war ended, the U.S. maintained a trade embargo against Vietnam which only formally ended in 1994, shortly before diplomatic relations were restored in 1995. That historic step toward reconciliation was due in large part to the advocacy of two American veterans, Senators John Kerry and John McCain, and the involvement of key Vietnamese diplomats such as Prime Minister Phan Van Khai, Deputy Prime Minister Nguyen Co Thach, and Nguyen Manh Cam.

Since the late 1980s, the Congress has approved funding for a number of humanitarian programs in Vietnam to address the harmful legacies of the war. We have provided many hundreds of millions of dollars to locate and destroy landmines and other unexploded ordnance, to assist people with severe physical and cognitive disabilities resulting from UXO accidents and exposure to Agent Orange, to clean up former U.S. air bases contaminated with dioxin, and to help Vietnam locate and identify some of its hundreds of thousands of missing soldiers and civilians. Each of these initiatives has been carried out in close cooperation with the Government of Vietnam, including its Ministry of Defense. Next year, we will embark on a unique project to create new exhibits at Vietnam's War Remnants Museum, to tell the story of this postwar cooperation.

These efforts have succeeded due to the vision and support of many people, including Bobby Muller who founded Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation—VVAF—and led the first group of American veterans back to Vietnam in 1981, President George H. W. Bush, and Sr. Lt. General Nguyen Chi Vinh. And they have opened the door to U.S.-Vietnam cooperation in many other areas, including higher education, public health, climate change, and regional security.

I mention this for context and to highlight the key role played by one person who has remained out of the limelight. Thao Griffiths, a Vietnamese woman originally from the small rural community of Ha Giang in the isolated, ethnic minority region of Vietnam bordering China, deserves special recognition.

Thao, a gifted student, was sent to school in Hanoi, graduated from the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam, became a Fulbright Scholar and received her master's degree at American University in Washington, was awarded an

Eisenhower Fellowship, and for 9 years served as the first Vietnamese citizen and the first woman to direct VVAF's programs in Vietnam. I was introduced to Thao by Bobby Muller 17 years ago, and since then, she has become a trusted source of invaluable advice for me and my staff. Even more than that, she is a friend to me and to my wife Marcelle, who once had the exhilarating experience of riding around the city of Hanoi on the back of Thao's motor scooter. Anyone familiar with Hanoi traffic knows what that means.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that none of the war legacy initiatives that have played such a central role in building a comprehensive partnership between the U.S. and Vietnam would have progressed as they have without Thao's constant encouragement and thoughtful advice. Fluent in English and a networker extraordinaire with unlimited positive energy, on a first name basis with many of Vietnam's top civilian and military leaders, academics and artists, and U.S. and foreign diplomats, Thao has helped build bridges between key players in both governments in ways that I doubt anyone else could have. For the past decade and a half, Thao has, more than anyone else, helped to smooth the way for the leaders of both governments to keep striving to deepen and expand our relations by overcoming distrust, bureaucratic obstacles, and cultural differences. Her efforts have had a profound and lasting impact on our relations, our mutual understanding, and on the lives of the Vietnamese and American people.

This work has been among the things I am proudest of having had a role in during my 48 years in the Senate. On behalf of myself and my wife Marcelle, I want to express my deepest appreciation to Thao Griffiths for her invaluable help in making it possible.

TRIBUTE TO DEAN SEIBERT

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, in 1986, when much of Central America was embroiled in armed conflicts in which hundreds of thousands of people, overwhelmingly civilians, were killed, a group of parishioners from the Franconia, NH, Congregational Church established Americans Caring Teaching Sharing—ACTS. They traveled to Honduras to support peace and justice through community development, beginning in the small subsistence farming village of El Rosario in the highlands of northwestern Honduras.

Since then, ACTS has become a nonprofit, nonsectarian organization involving hundreds of volunteers who have contributed thousands of hours to ACTS' mission of improving the lives of people in rural Honduras through community projects focused on basic healthcare, nutrition, sanitation, education, agriculture, and economic diversification. ACTS is governed and sustained by volunteers. Teams travel to Honduras several times a year, for a

week or 2, to help move the projects forward.

Over the years, the program has expanded to include about a dozen communities surrounding El Rosario. ACTS has developed a close working relationship with the villagers, who are the visionaries for progress. The villagers set the priorities and perform much of the labor. ACTS volunteers provide the technical skills, guidance, material resources, and hands-on help. The result has been a successful example of sustainable, community development in one of the most neglected, impoverished parts of the country.

In addition to the Honduran communities in which ACTS supports projects, it has developed partnerships and associations with many U.S. and Honduran organizations, institutions of higher education, and foundations.

I mention this to provide context and to highlight the extraordinary dedication and leadership of Dean Seibert, long-time resident of Norwich, VT, and professor emeritus at the Geisel School of Medicine, who has been affiliated with ACTS for over 20 years and led the organization for most of that time. He has visited El Rosario as team leader over 30 times. This year alone Dean traveled there three times. Some might find that remarkable, since Dean celebrated his 90th birthday in August. To those who know Dean, it wasn't remarkable at all. His enthusiasm and dedication are indefatigable.

Dean has long had an interest in community development and the challenges of providing healthcare to people of different cultures and traditions. He has worked with the Tohono O'odum, Navajo, Hopi, and Pueblo tribes in the American southwest, and he provided care to flood victims in the Mosquito Coast area of Honduras after Hurricane Mitch, to war refugees in Albania, Kosovo, and Liberia, to earthquake survivors in Pakistan and Haiti, and to flood victims following the Indonesian tsunami and Hurricane Katrina in the U.S. He received the Albany Medical College Alumni Humanitarian Award and the Geisel School of Medicine John H. Lyons award for humanism in medicine.

If that weren't enough, in the past year, Dean has played a central role in creating a new nonprofit, Honduran Tolupan Education Program—Honduran TEP—devoted to building libraries and providing other basic services in half a dozen marginalized Tolupan indigenous communities in the mountainous province of Yoro. Honduran TEP is based on the recognition that literacy and access to educational resources are fundamental to enabling the Tolucan to develop their communities and defend against corrupt entities that threaten their cultural survival.

In the Congress, we talk a lot about leadership, about what it means, about its importance. We talk about how the Senate can and should be the conscience of the Nation. When I think of

Dean Seibert and what he has done in his life, how he has used his medical training and experience, combined with his commitment to social justice, for the betterment of others born into extreme poverty or victims of tragic losses, I can't think of a better example of leadership and conscience.

For much of Honduras' modern history, the U.S. has propped up corrupt, abusive governments and provided their security forces with training and equipment to support poorly conceived strategies to combat drug trafficking and stop migration. The consequences for the Honduran people and Honduras' democratic institutions have been devastating. For the most part, it is not a history to be proud of.

But all Vermonters should be proud of Dean Seibert and ACTS' and Honduran TEP's volunteers for showing a different face of America to the people of Honduras—a face of generosity, compassion, opportunity, and hope.

TRIBUTE TO CA VAN TRAN

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, in 1988, after speaking with Bobby Muller, a Vietnam veteran who was wounded and later founded the Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation—VVAF—to help alleviate the suffering of Vietnamese and Cambodians who were badly injured in the war, I met with President George H. W. Bush and Secretary of State James Baker at the White House.

At the time, the United States and Vietnam did not have diplomatic relations. Vietnam's economy had been devastated by the war, but the U.S. had a trade embargo against the country which remained in effect for another 15 years. There were many hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese who had been severely disabled due to war injuries, with no access to rehabilitation services. President Bush and Secretary Baker and I agreed that it was in the interest of the United States to begin reconciling with Vietnam by addressing some of the worst legacies of the war and that the way to begin was to use what later became known as the "Leahy War Victims Fund," administered by the U.S. Agency for International Development, to provide artificial limbs and wheelchairs to victims of landmines and other unexploded ordnance—UXO.

That initiative, beginning in Vietnam, was expanded over the years to many other countries whose people have been harmed by armed conflict, and it continues to this day. One of the implementers of the Leahy War Victims Fund in Vietnam, starting in the early 1990s, has been Vietnam Assistance for the Handicapped—VNAH—whose founder and president, Ca Van Tran, left Vietnam as a refugee in 1975 with hardly a penny to his name. Over many years, through hard work and perseverance, Ca became a successful businessman in the United States. After returning to Vietnam and seeing